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THEN THERE WERE THREE

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by
ELEANOR FARJEON
with
ISOBEL *and* JOHN MORTON-SALE

MARTIN PIPPIN IN THE DAISY FIELD
SING FOR YOUR SUPPER
CHERRYSTONES
THE MULBERRY BUSH
THE STARRY FLOOR

THEN
THERE WERE
THREE

being

CHERRYSTONES * THE MULBERRY BUSH * THE STARRY FLOOR

Verses by Eleanor Farjeon

Drawings by Isobel & John Morton-Sale

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▪

First-come was Cherrystones,
When the warm sun
Reddened the fruit for you,
Then there was One.

Next-come was Mulberry-Bush.
When the bright dew
Freshened the leaves for you,
Then there were Two.

Last-come, the Starry Floor
Shed from its lea
Star after star on you.
Then there were Three.

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CHERRYSTONES

To
CHERRY-ANN
(Roysia)

■

*How many cherries
Have you got?
Eat up your cherries
On the spot,
Count your cherry-stones,
Learn your lot,
Are you lucky
Or are you not?*

■



Silk

To town, to town,
To buy a silk gown!
Cedar, or saffron, or cinnamon-brown?
Stow them away until I grow old,
And show me some silk with a flower in its fold,
A lilywhite silk with a girdle of green
And one red rose where it can't be seen.

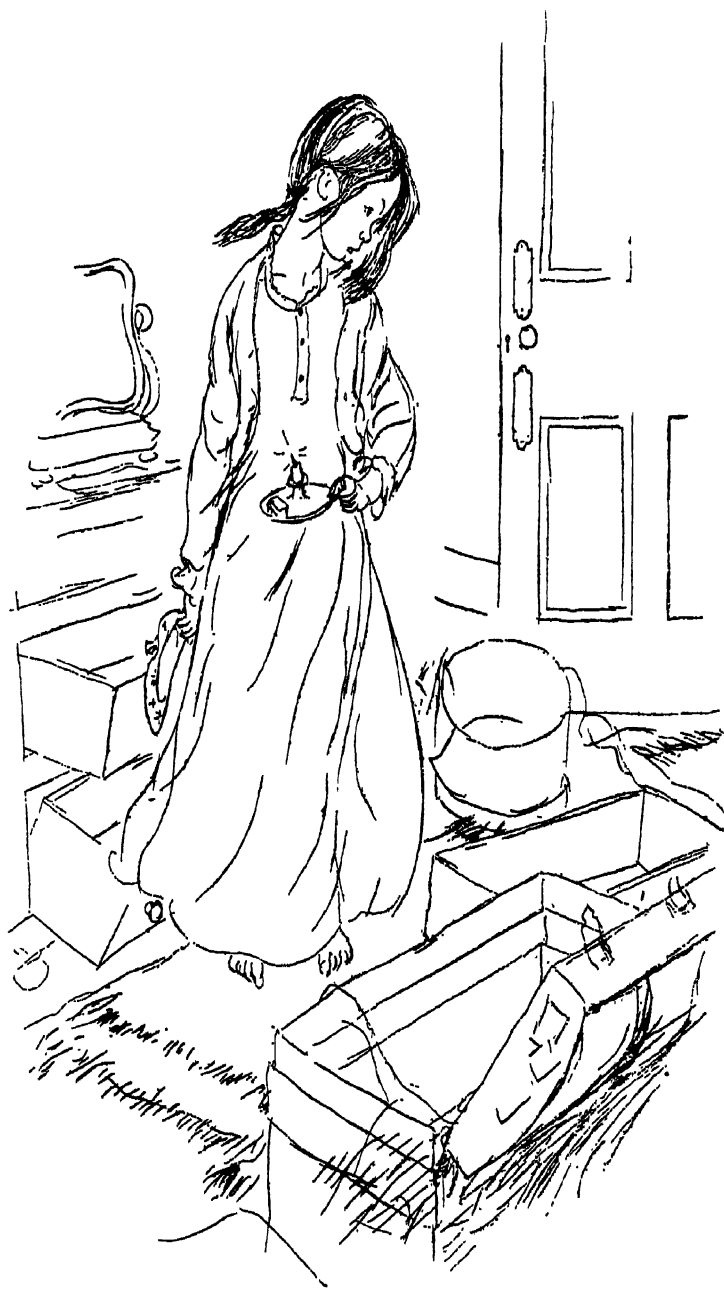


Satin

I had a satin slipper,
A single satin slipper
My mother left behind her
 The day she danced away.
So I stood on one toe,
Had to stand on one toe,
With t'other toe behind me
 I just danced away.

I met the Lord of London,
The lofty Lord of London.
Before he fell behind me
 He knelt in my way.
'One-foot-in-air-miss,
What about a pair, miss?
Cast a look behind you
 Before you dance away.'

I paired with him in satin,
Sheeny-shiny satin,
Seven yards behind me
 The train trailed away,
And my one satin slipper,
Glossy as a kipper.
I've never looked behind me
 From that day.



Cotton

My wedding-gown's cotton,
My wedding-gown's cheap,
It's crisper than sea-foam
And whiter than sheep,
Printed with daisies
In yellow and green,
A prettier wedding-gown
Never was seen!
Light-heart and light-foot
I'll walk into church
As straight and as slim
As a silvery birch,
And after my wedding
I never will lay
Like ladies my wedding-gown
Lightly away.
I'll wash it in soapsuds
As fresh as when new,
And rinse it in rainwater
Softer than dew,
And peg it on Saturdays
High on the line,
And wear it on Sundays
Full of sunshine.
My wedding-gown's cotton,
It cost me a crown,
Was ever girl wed in
A commoner gown?—
As birds in the branches,
As flowers on the green,
The commonest wedding-gown
Ever was seen!



Rags

Rhoda-in-rags
Runs in the street,
Little to wear
And less to eat,
No hat on her head,
No shoes on her feet,
Rhoda-in-rags
Runs in the street.

Robin-in-rags
Lies by the road,
Having no bed,
Board, or abode.
'Even old kings
Only wore woad!'
Robin-in-rags
Laughs on the road.

Rhoda-in-rags,
Run from your street!
Robin-in-rags,
Rise to your feet!
Wed in the hedge
And live without load,
Robin and Rhoda
In rags on the road.



Tinker

Tinker-man, tinker-man, mend me my kettle!
Woman, old woman, and how will you settle?
When tea-kettle's mended I'll bid it boil up
And tell you your fate from the leaves in the cup.

With my tinketty-tanketty
What do you think?
Off you go, on you go, tanketty-tink!

Tinker-man, tinker-man, mend me my pot!
Woman, young woman, and what have you got?
Ten clever fingers, a heart that beats true,
And a very best foot to put foremost with you.

With my tinketty-tanketty
Tip me the wink,
Off we go, on we go, tanketty-tink!



TAILOR

I saw a little Tailor sitting stitch, stitch, stitching
Cross-legged on the floor of his kitch, kitch,
kitchen.

His thumbs and his fingers were so nim, nim,
nimble

With his wax and his scissors and his thim, thim,
thimble.

His silk and his cotton he was thread, thread,
threading

For a gown and a coat for a wed, wed, wedding,
His needle flew as swift as a swal, swal, swallow,
And his spools and his reels had to fol, fol, follow.

He hummed as he worked a merry dit, dit, ditty:
'The Bride is as plump as she's pret, pret, pretty,
I wouldn't have her taller or short, short, shorter,
She can laugh like the falling of wat, wat, water,

'She can put a cherry-pie, togeth, geth, gether,
She can dance as light as a feath, feath, feather,
She can sing as sweet as a fid, fid, fiddle,
And she's only twenty inches round the mid, mid,
middle.'

The happy little Tailor went on stitch, stitch,
stitching

The black and the white in his kitch, kitch,
kitchen.

He will wear the black one, she will wear the
white one,

And the knot the Parson ties will be a tight, tight,
tight one.



Soldier

I walked in my clogs on Salisbury Plain,
And all of a sudden it started to rain!
The Plain was as broad as the Plain was bare,
There wasn't an inch of shelter there.

As I was wondering what to do
Before my petticoat got wet through,
All of a sudden a Soldier came—
'Corporal Caramel is my name.

'I've a waterproof tent of a lovely green
That will keep you dry in this dripping scene.'
All of a sudden I upped and went
To Corporal Caramel's waterproof tent.

He sat me down on a rubbery sheet,
Took off my clogs and dried my feet.
He looked so stalwart, he looked so smart,
All of a sudden I lost my heart.

He dried my feet and put on my clogs,
And said, 'It is raining cats and dogs!
Why don't you stay and be my wife?'
So all of a sudden I stayed for life.



Sailor

My sweetheart's a Sailor,
He sails on the sea,
When he comes home
He brings presents for me;
Coral from China,
Silks from Siam,
Parrots and pearls
From Seringapatam,
Silver from Mexico,
Gold from Peru,
Indian feathers
From Kalamazoo,
Scents from Sumatra,
Mantillas from Spain,
A fisherman's float
From the waters of Maine,
Reindeers from Lapland,
Ducks from Bombay,
A unicorn's horn
From the Land of Cathay—
Isn't it lucky
For someone like me
To marry a Sailor
Who sails on the sea!



Coach

There was a yellow pumpkin
Born on a pumpkin-patch,
As clumsy as a 'potamus,
As coarse as cottage-thatch.
It longed to be a gooseberry,
A greengage, or a grape,
It longed to give another scent
And have another shape.
The roses looked askance at it,
The lilies looked away—
'This thing is neither fruit nor flower!'
Their glances seemed to say.

One shiny night of midsummer,
When even fairies poach,
A good one waved her wand and said,
'O Pumpkin! be a coach!'
A coach of gold! a coach of glass!
A coach with satin lined!
If you should seek a thousand years,
Such you would not find.
The Princess in her crystal shoes
Eager for the dance
Stepped inside the pumpkin-coach
And rolled to her romance.

The roses reached out after it,
The lilies looked its way—
'O that we were pumpkins too!'
Their glances seemed to say.



Carriage

The Cream, the Bay,
The Dapple-Grey,
The Chestnut, and the Black,
Which will the Lady choose to-day
To trot her there and back?

The Cream can go
As soft as snow,
The Bay as fast as fire,
The Dapple-Grey is safe and slow
And never known to tire.

The Chestnut flies
As though the sky's
Gold chariot he drew,
The Black cavorts with flashing eyes
And nostrils bright with dew.

Oh in her fall
Of lace and all
Her finery she goes
With loving hands from stall to stall,
As lovely as a rose.

The Cream, the Bay,
The Dapple-Grey,
The Chestnut, and the Black,
She's chosen all the five to-day
To bring her there and back.



Farm Cart

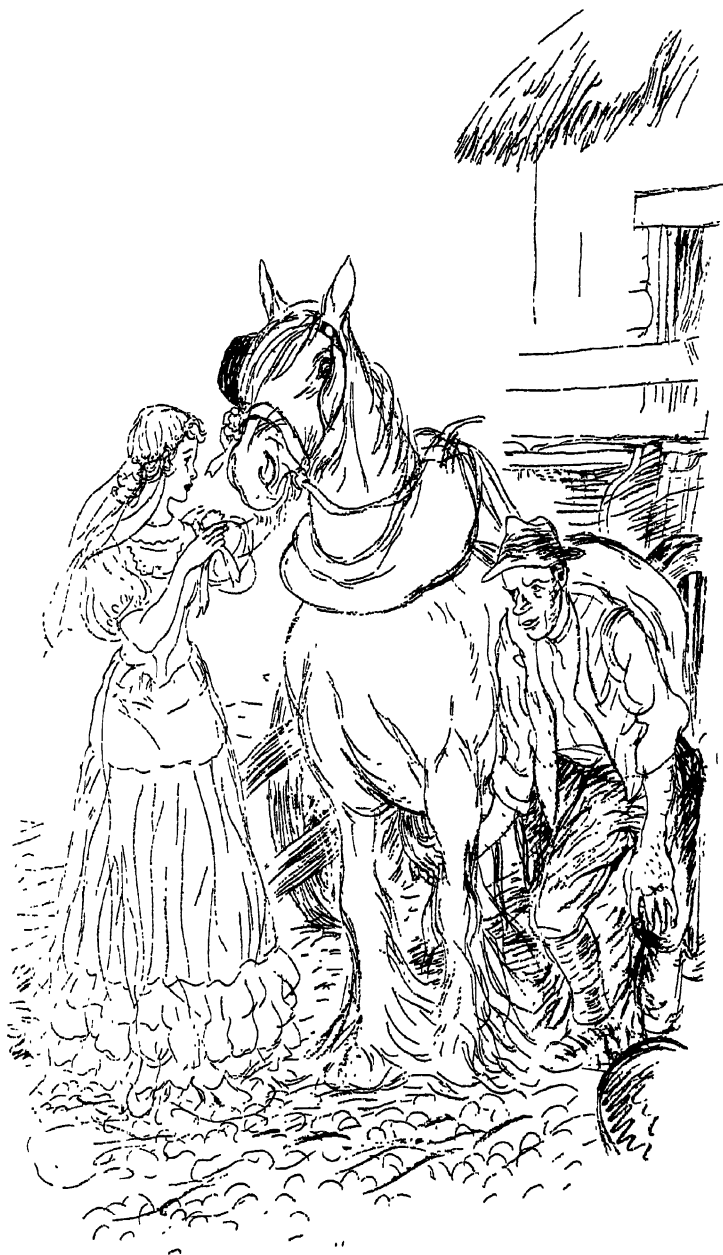
The cart that carries hay,
The cart that carries corn,
Will carry you to church, my lass,
To-morrow in the morn.

There's sheep and little lambs
Has travelled in the cart,
And pigs has been its passengers
To and fro the mart.

Cordwood and oaken logs
It's carted from the wood
When woodman's axe have done its job
And felled the tree that stood.

Time my dad moved house
The cart have carried stools,
Tables, chairs, and kitchen things,
And beds, and garden tools.

Many and many a load
Have been the old cart's due,
But never have it borne, my lass,
So sweet a load as you.



Wheelbarrow

He dumped her in the wheelbarrow
And trundled her away!
How he chaffed and how she laughed
On their wedding-day!

He bumped her through the garden gate,
He bounced her down the lane!
Then he reeled and then she squealed,
And off they bounced again.

He jiggled her across the ditch,
He joggled her through the holt!
He stubbed his toe and she cried O!
Whenever she got a jolt.

He wiggled her up the bridle-path,
He woggled her through the street—
Down he stumbled! down she tumbled,
Right at the Parson's feet!



Rich Man

I saw a Rich Man walking down the street
With a chain across his waistcoat and spats on his
feet,

With silver in his pockets that jingled as he walked,
And a solid gold tooth that gleamed when he
talked.

He walked by the girls with their baskets on their
knees

Full of white clove pinks and pink sweet peas,
He walked by the flower-girls whose baskets
smelled like honey

With his face full of care and his mind full of
money.

I saw the Rich Man, he never saw me,
So I see more than the Rich Man can see.



Poor Man

What have you got to eat,
poor man?

Nothing, he said,
But a crust of bread.
A crust that is shared is sweet,
poor man.

What sort of roof have you,
poor man?

Nothing, he said,
But a shepherd's shed.
A shed that takes one takes two,
poor man.

What can you give your wife,
poor man?

Nothing, he said,
But hand, heart, and head.
It's a gift that will last for life,
poor man.



Beggarman

Hooroo, hooroo! won't it be fun
When the beggars go by to be married to one!

To wear old bonnets and boots and clo'
Like farmer's guy that frightens the crow.

To eat the scraps, now less, now more,
Begged of the woman at the door.

To find a penny and blue the lot,
Since you cannot save what you haven't got.

To sleep by day and to walk by night,
And whistle because your heart is light.

To talk to everyone, glum or gay,
And see the world as you beg your way.

Won't it be fun, hooroo, hooroo,
When I marry a beggar to be one too!



Thief

Stop, thief! stop!
People, stop the thief!
Little Matty Merrythought
Is sobbing with grief.

It's only to be given,
It isn't to be bought,
What he has stolen
From Matty Merrythought.

Matty came to market
With cherries in a cart;
The thief pinched a whiteheart
And her heart.

Run, people, run!
Run till you drop!
Stop, thief, stop, thief,
Stop, thief, stop!



Castle

My castle is built in the air
With turrets of light.
My husband is waiting up there
Till I come in his sight.

It is built at the end of the day
Of marble and gold
That always are melting away,
So it never grows old.

Its gardens are crowded with rose
And violet flowers,
Where the river of silver that flows
Falls soon into showers

Sprinkling its shimmering stars
On the vanishing green
Lawns. Then night puts up the bars,
And the lawns lie unseen.

Each evening they build it anew,
My castle up there,
Whose towers are the green and the blue
And the gold of the air.



Mansion

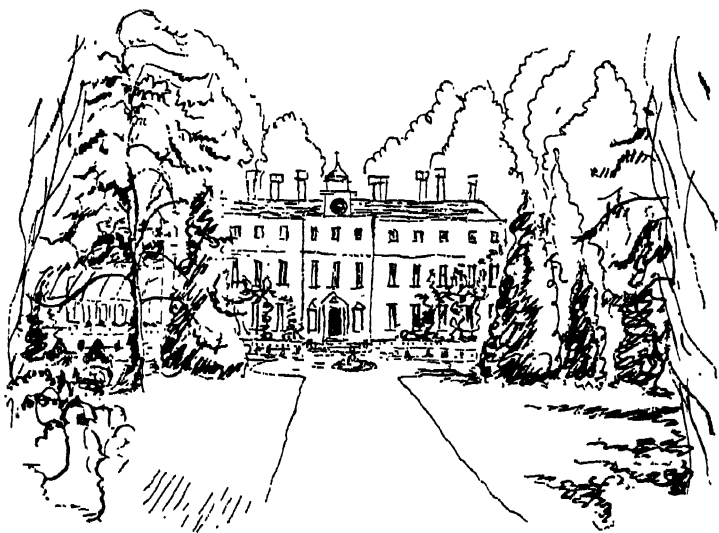
The Housekeeper in bombazine is rattling of her
keys
And reaching down the jellied quince and potted
strawberries,
She's laying out the silken sheets and towels white
as May,
For the Lady of the Mansion is expected home to-
day.

The Cook in her starched apron with her cap a bit
awry
Has iced the spicy wedding-cake which stands three
stories high,
With silver leaves and orange-buds she makes a
great array
For the Lady of the Mansion who is coming home
to-day.

The Gardener in his glass-house cuts the finest of
the grapes,
The Coachman dons his gold cockade and seven
yellow capes,
The Footmen wear their powdered wigs and scarlet
coats so gay
For the Lady of the Mansion who is coming home
to-day.

The Parlourmaids and Chambermaids are running
to and fro,
The Lady'smaid is smartening her costume with a
bow,
The Butler's arms are full of port, champagne, and
Royal Tokay
For the Lady of the Mansion who is coming home
to-day.

And the jolly little Buttons in his suit of bottle-
green,
With buttons back and front and round about and
in between,
Is busy turning somersaults and shouting 'Hip
hooray!
The Lady of the Mansion is coming home to-day!'



Cottage

*When I live in a Cottage
I shall keep in my Cottage*

Two different Dogs,
Three creamy Cows,
Four giddy Goats,
Five pewter Pots
Six silver Spoons
Seven busy Beehives
Eight ancient Appletrees
Nine red Rosebushes
Ten teeming Teapots
Eleven chirping Chickens
Twelve cosy Cats with their kittenish Kittens
and
One blessed Baby in a Basket.

That's what I'll have when I live in my Cottage.



Pig-Sty

O my!

Sit-in-the-sty,

Why do you snivel and sniff and cry?

I've married a Swineherd without any feelings

But for turnip-parings and apple-peelings.

Fie, fie,

Sit-in-the-sty!

Blow your nose and wipe your eye,

Scratch the old sow and make the best of it,

Peelings and parings and all the rest of it!



This Year

Starling in my cherry-tree,

It's *this* year!

I have counted three times three—

It's *this* year!

P'raps before the next two cherries

Make an earring

For my wearing,

Or before the last bright berry's

Come to sweeten

And be eaten,

Or before the boughs are all in

Yellow dresses

Like princesses,

Or before the leaves have fallen,

Light as butter-

flies a-flutter—

Listen, starling!

Greedy darling,

Pecking in my cherry-tree,

It's *this* year!

Peck your fill for all of me,

Since you left me three-times-three

For *this*-year, *this*-year, *this*-year, *this*-year,

THIS-year!



Next Year

She counted her cherries and wept a salt tear.
Three-hundred-and-sixty-five days in a year!
Time is a snail and the clock goes so slow—
How can I wait a whole year for my beau?
How can I tarry so long for my dear?
Three-hundred-and-sixty-five days in a year.

She counted her cherries and laughed long and
light.

Twenty-four hours in a day and a night!
This, if my Calendar does not deceive,
Is the last of December, oh, this is the Eve!
To-morrow is Next Year, Next Year is in sight—
Twenty-four hours in a day and a night.



Some time! some time!
When will it be?
It might be winter,
It might be spring,
With snow on the ground
Or fruit on the tree,
Some time! some time!
When will it be?

Some one! some one!
What is he like?
Perhaps a coal-man,
Perhaps a king.
Will he come on a horse
Or a motor-bike?
Some one! some one!
What is he like?

Somewhere! somewhere!
Oh, but where?
In a hollow
Or on a height?
Over the water?
At the fair?
Somewhere! somewhere!
Oh, but where?

Some time! some time!
When will it be?
It might be morning,
It might be night,
With the sun in the sky
Or the moon on the sea—
Some time! some time!
When will it be?



Never

Never! wailed the wind.
Never! croaked the crow.
Never to be married,
 Oh, oh, oh!
What shall she do,
 Or where go?

Never! sobbed the star.
Never! moaned the moon.
Never to be married,
 Late or soon.
Not in January
 Or June.

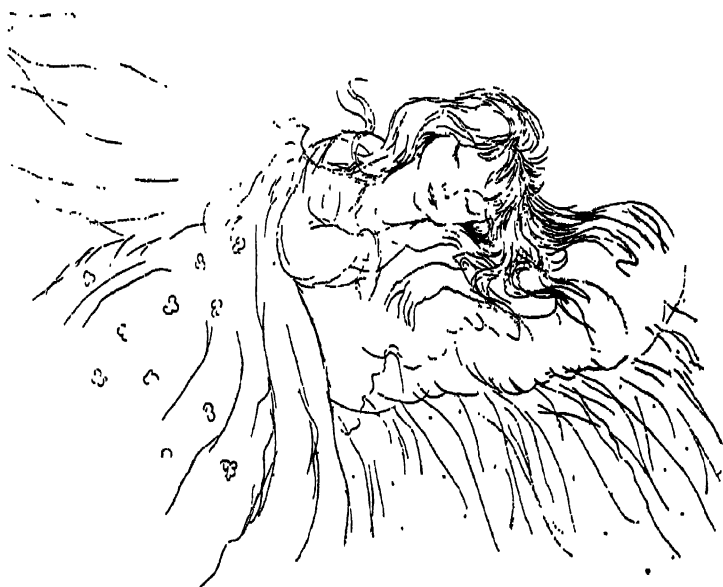
Never! crowed the cock.
Never! clucked the hen.
Never to be married,
 Now or then.
Not one husband
 Among men.

Never! lisped the light.
Never! sighed the shade.
Never to be married,
 I'm afraid.
 Poor young maid!
 Poor Old Maid.





*Cherry pie black,
Cherry pie red,
Give me some more, please,
Cherry Ann said.
Give her some more
And tuck her in bed,
And she'll dream of cherry-trees
Black and red.*





THE
MULBERRY
BUSH

To

MARGARET BETTESWORTH

*Because our Favourite Game
Is the First One in this Book*

Ring-a-Ring-a-Roses

I saw a ring of roses
Dance in the light,
One was a red rose,
One was a white,
One was a tea-rose,
One was a moss-rose,
One was the colour
Of candle-light.

*Hush-a! hush-a! the wind blows away.
Tumble down, roses, at your play.*

I saw my ring of roses
All fall down!
One was Mary Meadows,
One was Betty Brown,
One was Polly Perkins,
One was Jenny Jenkins,
Letty fell down laughing,
And Fan with a frown.

*Hush-a! hush-a! the wind blows away.
Up with you, roses, up and play.*



Postman's Knock

Postman's at the door!
Who's the letter for?
Pretty Kate McGibbons
In her cherry-coloured ribbons.

Who's the letter from,
Harry, Dick, or Tom?
Kitty will know better
When she's gone and got her letter.

What is it about?
Hush! she's going out.
Hope it's nothing shocking
That set the postman knocking.

Why is she so long?
Is there something wrong?
It would be a pity
If her letter upset Kitty.

Did you hear a smack?—
Hush! she's coming back.
Pretty Kate McGibbons
Is redder than her ribbons.



Musical Chairs

The Musical Chairs, O the Musical Chairs!
They stand there perversely in turn-about pairs,
While snatches of catches

and strains of refrains

Go winding around them in treacherous chains.

The music of Italy,

England,

and France,

The Austrian waltz,

the Hungarian dance,

The lilt of the Celt

and the reel of the Gael,

Come marching—

come tripping—

come floating—

and fail!

Oh, he who should linger to listen too long

Will listen in vain for the end of the song,

And chasing the will-o'-the-wisp of an air

Be lost in the silence which swallows his Chair.

It was Here!

It is There!

Hurry, hurry!

Oh, where?—

The Chair and the Music no longer are there.



Follow-My-Leader

Follow your Leader
Wherever he goes!
Be at his heels
On the tips of your toes,
Echo the sounds he makes
All down the chain,
Mimic his gestures
However inane.
If he climbs you must climb,
If he crawls you must crawl,
Skip through the cellar,
And hop through the hall,
Cut through the kitchen
And stump up the stairs,
Dance round the dining-room
Table and chairs,
Barge through the bedrooms
And rumple the beds,
Leap up the ladder
That leads to the leads,
Grope in the gutters
And romp on the roof—
Then if your Leader
Demands a last proof,
And spreading his arms
Flies sky-high to the stars,
Follow your Leader
To Saturn or Mars.
But if he shouts 'Tea-time!'
Rush down in his wake
To brown bread-and-butter
And jam and plum-cake.



I Sent a Letter to My Love

She wrote him a letter,
She wrote to her love,
She slipped her wee love-letter
Under her glove.

It had seventeen darlings,
And thirty-one dears,
And fifty-nine kisses,
And one or two tears.

She went to the pillar-box
Meaning to post it,
But when she arrived there,
Good gracious! she'd lost it!

And someone or other,
But who she can't prove,
Has picked up the letter
She wrote to her love.

If the butcher or baker
Or milkman or sweep
Has laughed at her letter
For shame she will weep.

Suppose all those darlings
And dears go amiss?
Suppose someone's stolen
A tear or a kiss?

It's as cruel as caging
A soft-breasted dove
To keep back the letter
She wrote to her love.



Here We Go, Looby, Looby, Looby

On Saturday Night,
When things aren't quite,
In fact, when they're clearly
Very nearly,
All of us
Who are thus-and-thus
Go abso-lootly looby!
We shake a leg,
We shiver an arm,
We don't mean nobody
Any harm,
But hither and thither
We dother and dither
When we're *abso-*
lootly
looby!

On Sunday we're as sane as sane
On Monday we're the same again,
On Tuesday we know chalk from cheese,
On Wednesday mind our Q's and P's,
On Thursday there's no green in our eye,
On Friday we're as fly as fly—

BUT

On Saturday Night,
When things aren't quite,
And the moon is moony,
And life is loony,



Though other weekdays
Are not the freak days
When all of us act the booby—
On Saturday Night
Our wits take flight
And Left and Right
With all our might
I and You
Go Looby-Loo
And are AB-
so-
LOOT-
ly
LOOBY!

Hide-and-Seek

(HIDING)

Tiptoe away! tiptoe away!

While Jane is counting a Hundred!
Where shall we go, above or below,
While Jane is counting a Hundred?
Under the table?

No, Mabel

is there!

Behind the wings of the grandfather-chair?
Hide in the curtain?

I'm certain

she'll see—

Creep away, creep away stealthily!

The linen-cupboard is warm and snug—
Peter's wrapped up in the travelling rug.
Don't whisper! don't giggle! *st!* look alive—
I'm sure she has got to Forty-five!
Under the bed is a lovely place—
Oh bother, it's full of Gwen and Grace.
The wardrobe is stuffed with Dick and Kate—
I'm certain she's got to Sixty-eight!
Up to the attics do a bunk,
Perhaps there's room in the wooden trunk—
No, it is crammed with Caroline.
She *must* have got to Seventy-nine!

Hide here! hide there! hide anywhere,
While Jane is counting a Hundred!
Be quick! be quiet! oh, do play fair
While Jane is counting a Hundred!
Hold your breath!
Stand still as death!
Squeeze up, Roger, make room for Beth!
Don't push!
don't rush!
She is coming—hush!
She has finished counting her Hundred.



Hide-and-Seek

(SEEKING)

When little Jane lifts up her head,
Uncovering her eyes,
Every other child has fled
Into the mysteries.
The playmates that she knew are gone
And Jane is left alone.

Oh Alice with the starry looks,
Oh Ann with gleaming curls,
What dusky corners, what dim nooks
Have hid you little girls?
The house is vast and Jane is small,
And are you here at all?

Oh Richard with the flashing smile,
Oh Rob with freckled brow,
Where are you hiding all this while,
You who were here but now?
The house lies in a sleep as deep
As Sleeping Beauty's sleep.

Through all the rooms grown deaf and blind
Jane seeks with throbbing heart
The hidden playmates whom to find
Will make small tremors start—
For when she finds them in the game,
They may not be the same.



Do You Know the Muffin Man?

Do you know the Muffin Man
Who lives in Drury Lane?
Of *course* I know the Muffin Man!
His name is Alfred Payne,
His daughter's name is Mary Ann,
His wife's is Sarah Jane.

His Mary Ann's a wonder at
The mixing of a muffin.
She rolls it round, she rolls it flat,
And puts the best of stuff in,
And if you praise her, sniffs, 'Wot, *that?*
Lor' bless yer, that ain't nuffin'!'

His Sarah Jane's a marvel when
She's making of a crumpet.
She'll punch it full of holes and then
Inside the oven dump it,
And snort when it comes out again,
'Them that don't like can lump it.'

Then Alf piles up his green-baize tray
In snow or shine or rain,
And all round London rings his way
His livelihood to gain.
Who *doesn't* know the Muffin Man
That lives in Drury Lane?



Cobbler, Cobbler, Mend My Shoe

Cobbler, Cobbler, what'll I do?

I'm going to meet my Willie,
But I've burnt the sole of my Sunday shoe,
And shan't I look a silly!

Cobbler, Cobbler, mend my shoe!
I'm meeting Willie at half-past-two.

Missy, I'd have you understand
With a mort o' jobs I'm saddled!
I've so many boots and shoes on hand
That my poor old brainpan's addled.
Now then, missy, be off wi' you—
I dassent take on your Sunday shoe.

I'm stitching a sandal to fit the foot
Of the Rag-and-bone-man's nipper,
The General wants his riding-boot,
And the Duchess her dancing-slipper.
What with brogues and clogs, and old and new,
I haven't no time for your Sunday shoe.

Cobbler, Cobbler, be kind and sweet,
You needn't be so short-spoken!
I've only a single pair to my feet,
And one of the pair is broken.
Do you want my heart to be broken too?
Cobbler, Cobbler, mend my shoe.

Did *you* never court when you were green?
Did *you* never go sweethearting?
Did *you* never count the hours between
A meeting and a parting?—
Drat it, missy! give over, do!
I'll mend your shoe by half-past-two.



Blind Man's Buff

Blindman! Blindman! Blundering about,
Barging round the furniture with hands stretched out.
Bind his eyes and blind his eyes with thick dark stuff,
Mind you see the handkerchief is tied tight enough!

Buffet the old buffer! biff him in the back!
Tug him by the coat-tails, turn him off his track,
Twist and tease and tickle him, tweak him by the
cuff,
Baffle the old buffer in Blind Man's Buff!

Ha, ha, Blindman! snatching at the air!
Ho, ho, Blindman! catching at a chair!
He, he, Blindman! clutching at *me*—
Ha, ha! ho, ho! he, he, he!

Bustle him and hustle him,
Muddle and befuddle him,
Bang him off his balance—don't be a funk!
Banter him! befoozle him!
Bewilder him! bamboozle him!
Batter, bait, and badger him, and then do a bunk!

Blindman! Blindman! See how he spins!
Bumping and stumping and barking of his shins!
Rumple him and crumple him, treat the buffer
rough—
But beware if he should bag you in Blind Man's
Buff!



Touch

He! He! He!
He's after you and me!
Run! for his lightest touch
Will alter us so much.

His fingertip may change
The shapes we live within
To forms with spirits strange
And creatures queer of skin.

You might become a snake,
I might become a swan,
Tomorrow you might wake
Up a Mastodon,

Or I might be a mole,
Or you a waterfall,
Or I a fiery coal,
Or both not here at all!

He! He! He!
He's after you and me!
Oh run from him! His touch
Would alter us too much.



Forfeits

*Here's a Thing and a very pretty Thing!
What shall be done to the Owner of this
very pretty Thing?*

*He shall bow to the Prettiest,
Kneel to the Wittiest,
And kiss the One he loves the best.*

Whom will he bow to?
And whom will he kneel to?
And whom after that will he offer love's seal to?
To which of us all
Is the kiss going to fall
That will tell us whom Paul
All these years has been leal to?

Oh, Belle is so witty
She shakes us with laughter—
And Nell is so pretty
That people stare after—
But Nell is too silly
To pass the last test of all,
Belle is too chilly
For loving the best of all.

It's Nell he will kneel to,
It's Belle he will bow to,
But whom will he offer the true lover's vow to?
And then—little Paul
Isn't five after all—
He's so awfully small,
Do you think he knows how to?

*Of course he does!
He ran and kissed his Mother.*



Consequences

The Queen of Sheba met Tom Smith
Outside St. Pancras Station.
She said to him, 'This life's a myth,'
And he said, 'Botheration!'
The Consequences were that when
It got into the papers
They hid themselves inside Big Ben
And never paid their drapers.
And what the World said *was*: 'You know,
I told you so! I *told* you so!'

Old Mother Shipton met Paul Pry
Inside a yellow taxi.
She said to him, 'The well's run dry.'
He said, 'I like 'em waxy.'
The Consequences were that when
She tried to sing a ballad
He sneaked into the lion's den
And ate its lobster salad.
And what the World said *was*: 'Pooh-pooh!
It doesn't do! It doesn't *do*!'

You met me and I met you
In the Bay of Biscay.
You said to me, 'The moon is blue.'
I said, 'It's rather risky.'



The Consequences were that when
Our ship had shot the narrows
We saw the Emperor's speckled hen
Lay seven monster marrows.
And what the World said *was*: 'My son,
It isn't done. *It is not done.*'

Methuselah and Sally Lunn
Met in a spot of bother—

*(That's enough of this game. Let's
play General Post.)*

General Post

The world is upsy-daisy,
The hemispheres are mixed,
The continents are crazy,
The towns have come unfixed.
Sheffield and Donderry and Shanghai and Pondi-
cherry,
Montreal and Mexico and Margate on the coast,
With flushed excited faces have jumped up to change
their places,
And Geography's gone groggy in the Gene-
ral
Post!

'Leeds to Salamanca!'
Hurry, Doris! hurry, Dan!
'Perth to Casablanca!'
Scurry, scurry, Nick and Nan!
Paris and Vienna, Nagasaki and Siena,
Cairo, Cotopaxi, and Chicago are on toast—
You'd think a war was waging while they're ramping
and rampaging
For a place to settle down on in the Gene-
ral
Post!

Washington is panting,
London's torn her frock,
Melbourne's tie is wanting,
There's trouble in Bangkok,
Moscow's lost his collar in the scrum with Walla-
Walla,
San Francisco's winded, Ghent has given up the
ghost,
There was nearly a free battle when Bussaco bumped
Seattle,
Oh all the World's gone wonky in the Gene-
ral
Post!



Tug-of-War

The rope she is stout an' the rope she is strong—

Tug away, my hearties, tug away!

All hands to it and we shan't be long—

But someone kick the old rag rug away!

Brace back your heels like I brace mine,

Don't let 'em pull us 'cross the handkerchief line—

That's right, little 'uns, you're doin' fine,

With a tug, tug, tug, tug, tug away!

There's a dozen of them to but twelve of us—

Tug away, my hearties, tug away!

But we'll haul like this, and we'll haul like thus—

Won't no one kick that old rag rug away?

Never mind the rope if it rasps your hand,

Never give an inch from your starting stand,

That's right, little 'uns, you're doin' grand,

With a tug, tug, tug, tug, tug away!

They're slippin'! they're slidin'! they're all but
done!

Tug away, my hearties, tug away!

Hey you, behind there! pull like fun

Now someone's kicked the old rag rug away!

Never mind your back if it starts for to crick,

Nothin' like a chap who knows how to stick—

Hooray, little 'uns! you've done the trick,

With a tug, tug, tug, tug, tug away!



I'm the King of the Castle!

The King's on his Castle,
The sun's on his crown,
The Rascals are trying
To pull the King down.

The sands round his Castle
Are stamped with their feet,
Their brown hands are reaching
The King to unseat.

The sea is a sparkle
Of silver and blue,
The gulls and the gannets
Wheel high as they mew,

The salt wind is blowing,
The foam is like cream,
The King's is the Castle
Of every man's dream.

No wonder the Rascals
Who envy his crown
Are storming the Castle
To pull the King down!



Spelling-Bee

Can you hear the Spelling Bee
Spelling the summer border?
Nothing spells as well as she,
The busy honey-hoarder.
She spells the flowers for hours and hours
All in their proper order.

She can spell
Stocks,
And Phlox,
And Dahlia,
And Azalea,
And Freesia!
And Nemesia!
And Wistaria,
And Calceolaria!
And Dianthus,
Polyanthus,
and Schizanthus!
And Chrysanthemum!
Xeranthemum!!
and Mesembryanthemum!!!

You'll hear her as she fills her sacks
Whenever it is sunny,
Spelling sweet words like Comb, and Wax,
And Hum, and Hive, and Honey.
Yet strange to tell, she *cannot* spell—
It's very, very funny—
No! she *can't*

spell

JAM!



Kiss-in-the-Ring

Step in the ring and kiss (*said she*).
No, strange lady, I'll not (*said he*).
Who kisses inside the fairy round
Will be in the power of the underground.
The emerald grass I dare not chance
Where mushrooms grow and little folk dance.

Put on the ring and kiss (*said she*).
Yes, sweet lady, I will (*said he*).
Who kisses inside the wedding-ring
Will envy nobody anything.
The golden ring with a kiss will hold
A young man happy until he is old.



Hunt the Thimble

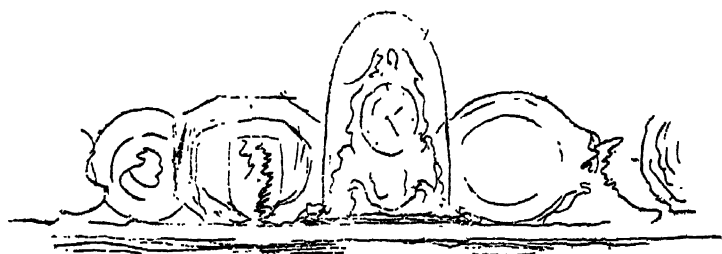
A thimble, a thimble! my Mother's gold thimble
Is somewhere in sight if it's true what we're told.
Blue, brown, and hazel eyes, spying and prying,
Are hunting my Mother's wee thimble of gold.

As soon as your nimble glance lights on the thimble,
Sit down very softly and don't turn a hair.
One after other sits down, while my Mother
Rocks backwards and forwards and smiles in her
chair.

Is it perched on a picture, or propped on a statue,
Or stuck in the keyhole instead of the key?
Oh thimble, perhaps I am looking right *at* you!
Is *that* you? Is *that* you? Oh, where can you
be?

Perhaps on the piano—the inkstand—the fender—
Or on the brass coal-scuttle gleaming so bright?
They all have sat down! Shall I have to surrender?
The little gold thimble is nowhere in sight.

A thimble, a thimble, my Mother's wee thimble?—
But why as she rocks is she laughing at me?
You booby! just linger to look on my finger—
Where else do you think that a thimble should be?



Magical Music

Listen! Miranda is playing magical music

Murmuring *Now you are cool!*

Trumpeting *Now you are warm!*

Miranda's fingers are weaving the wandering music

Whispering grass in the wind,

Thundering cloud in a storm.

Something I have to do—oh, what is it, music?

Chanting so loud *You are right!*

Sighing so low *You are wrong!*

Something I have to do with the help of the music

Lovely Miranda makes,

Luring me on with a song.

Is it to find something hidden, known to the music?

Is it to stand on my head—

Or to kiss my mother—or what?

All round the room I feel my way to the magical
music

Shivering *Now you are cold!*

Triumphing *Now you are hot!*



Nuts in May

Shall we gather our nuts in May, Maureen,
 Shall we gather our nuts in May,
When the trees have not quite got their green,
And the cuckoo's heard and the swallow's seen,
 And the lark is still at play?
 Shall we gather our nuts in May?

In their greeny frills and their pinky shells
 Shall we fetch our nuts away
With the mossy scents and the meadowy smells
Of the primrose stars and the hyacinth bells?
 On a blue and golden day
 Shall we fetch our nuts away?

But never you crack in the parlour door
 The nuts you gather in May!
The delicate shell holds nothing more
Than a dream-to-come in its tender core—
 Oh, never you crack in play
 The gathering of your May.



Oranges and Lemons

Oranges bright as the sun!
Lemons as pale as the moon!
Here they come, one after one,
All to be harvested soon.
Under the arch they go flinging,
Bursting with laughter and singing
With all the town bell-ringers ringing
and swinging their tune.

Candles and bed-time are near—
Look! we have caught you, my dear!
Now whisper low in my ear
Which one will *you* be, which one?
A lemon as pale as the moon
and as clear,
Or an orange as bright as the sun?
Don't let the other ones hear!

Now once again they go swinging,
Swinging and springing along,
And all the town steeples are ringing and flinging
and singing their song!



Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

There is a bush that no one sees,
The loveliest of little trees,
Full of sweet dark mulberries.

Round and round it children go,
Sometimes quick and sometimes slow,
Singing words all children know.

While they sing the bush is there
Planted in the empty air,
With fruit for every child to share,

Little girls with sandalled foot,
Little boys in clumping boot,
Running round the mulberry root,

Fair and dark ones, loitering, leaping,
Gay and grave ones, laughing, weeping,
Playing, working, waking, sleeping.

When the moment's game is done,
When the playing child is gone,
The unseen mulberry bush stands on,

And with all its leafy eyes
Childhood's flickering shadow spies
Dancing down the centuries,



And with all its leafy ears
Evermore the footstep hears
Of vanished childhood's hundred years,

Singing still without a sound,
Running silently around
The bush that never grew in ground.



THE STARRY FLOOR

To
BEATRICE AND SALLY

While the star-maker sat
Fashioning stars
With shimmery shafts
And silvery spars,
Two bright sparks
Of heavenly worth
Slipped through his fingers
And sped to earth.

The one was tall,
The other was wee,
The other was Sally,
The one was Bea,
And since by chance
They lighted on Devon
They know no difference
'Twixt earth and heaven.

The Earth

*Did you know, did you know
That the Earth is a star?*

Somebody far
Far away
At the end of the day
Looks out on the sky
With the stars swimming by,
And cries: 'Oh, how bright
The Earth is tonight!
How wonderful it must be, how rare,
To be born on the bright, bright Earth
up there!
How the streams must shine!
How the grass must glisten
When the dew is risen!
How clear and fine
The rays must fall
On the radiant seas
And the fountains tall
Of the lustrous trees!
On the glittering wall
Of the holly-hedge
And the sparkling sedge
By the pearly pool!
How the mud must gleam,
And the hill-tops beam,
How full, how full

Of light it must be
To live on the bright bright Earth
I see
Turning up there,
Burning up there,
Swimming away on the lambent air!'

*Didn't you know
You are born on a star?
Well, you are.*



The Planets

The Moon is made of silver,
The Sun is made of gold,
And Jupiter is made of tin,
So the ancients told.

Venus is made of copper,
Saturn is made of lead,
And Mars is made of iron,
So the ancients said.

But what the Earth was made of
Very long ago
The ancients never told us
Because they didn't know.



The Zodiac

These are the Signs of the Zodiac:

The Man who waters the starry track,
The little Fishes that swim in the sky,
The Ram that ramps as the winds roar by,
The Bull that tosses the clouds to tatters,
The Boys who think fun is all that matters,
The Crab that clambers the shores of the air,
The Lion that makes high heaven his lair,
The Lady who walks the celestial meadow,
The Scales that weigh the moon and her
shadow,
The Scorpion whose tail has a fiery sting,
The Archer who shoots with a twinkling
string,
The Goat that nibbles the starry track :
Those are the Signs of the Zodiac.



Saturn

Old Saturn lolls in heaven,
The laziest of loons,
Waited on by seven
Nimble little moons.

One lights his candle,
Two turns his sheet,
Three slips the sandal
Off his horny feet.

Four warms his body
With a crimson coal,
Five brings him toddy
In a brazen bowl,

Six combs his hoary
Beard long and deep,
Seven tells the story
That sends him off to sleep.



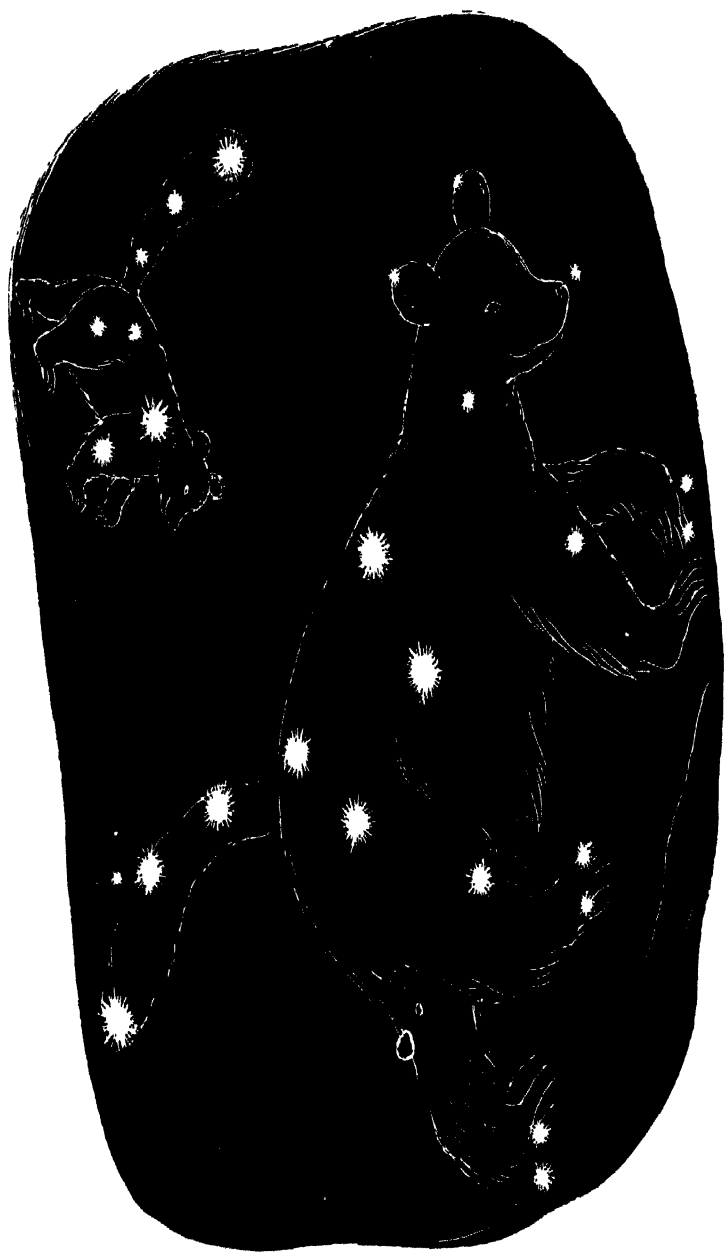
Big Bear and Little Bear

Said Big Bear to Little Bear:

*What are you doing,
Small Brother Bruin?—*
‘Looking for honey,
Yellow and runny!
Star-clusters humming
Are brimming the comb
In the hive of the air,
Going and coming,
And I’ll never go home
Till I’ve licked the sky bare.’

Said Big Bear to Little Bear:

When will you get it?—
‘When cupids start singing,
And chimes begin ringing,
And kisses are clinging,
And sweethearts are young.
When I have eat it
Without any spoon
I’ll hang out my tongue
Till the next honey moon.’



Queen Cassiopeia

Queen Cassiopeia
Sits throned on her chair
With her eyes on the sea
And her nose in the air.
If you should ask what on earth
she is doing up there :

Queen Cassiopeia
When she was on earth
Was terribly vain
Of her beauty and birth,
And created a lot more imbroglios
than she was worth.

She swore she was fairer
Ten times and again
Than any fair Nereid
In Neptune's train
Entwining her emerald locks with
the flowers of the main.

This worked the old Sea-King
Up into a stew !
He summoned a Monster
To make a to-do,
And trouble of all sorts began for
to boil and to brew.



So Jove on Olympus
Yawned twice and arose—
‘These broils upon earth
Disturb heaven’s repose.
Since the Queen turns her nose up
in air, let her follow her nose!’

And Cassiopeia,
Enthroned on her chair,
Swears: ‘Never a Nereid
Of Neptune as fair
As the Queen in the clouds who
reigns over the sea of the air!’

The Hyades

These are the Hyades
Who keep the rains,
The cloudbursts and the cataracts
And the linked chains
Of April showers
That smell of future fruit and present
flowers.

These are the nymphs
Who took an infant god
Into their tender tutelage
Before he trod
And from the vine
Pressed out the running rivers of
sweet wine.

So when they died
Young Bacchus of his Sire
Demanded: 'Change this sevenfold
sisterhood
To stars of fire,
To live again
In heaven as the keepers of the rain:

That when on earth
My grapes require their fall,
I may upon my fertile foster-nurses
Once more call,
Whose watery urns
In gold and purple streams shall bring
returns.'

These are the Hyades.
Whenever rain,
Cloudburst or cataract
Or April's chain,
Thunders or drips—
Young Bacchus puts his winecup to
his lips.



The Pleiades

Fair are the Pleiades
Standing in moon-daisies
 Up to the knees,
Seven in cluster
Bathed in the lustre
 Of milky-white seas,
 Glimmering
 Shimmering
Maidens of heaven
Assembled at even
 In silvery bands,
Fair are the Pleiades,
Gathering moon-daisies,
Moon-daisies growing
 In milky white sands,
Foaming and flowing
 Among their white hands.



Cygnus

Cygnus, the Swan of Heaven
Never seen by day,
When night has darkened even
Swims on the Milky Way.

With breast as soft as curd
And neck as smooth as cream,
He floats, a milk-white bird
Upon a milk-white stream.

He is the swan of dream
With plumage pale as whey,
Cygnus, the Swan of Heaven,
Never seen by day.



Orion's Belt

The huntsman Orion
Of giant girth
Frightened the lion,
Felled the wild boar,
And followed Silene the moon from his
station on earth.

The huntress Silene
Of heavenly race
Loosened a sheeny
Shaft from her bow,
And shot by misfortune Orion from aerial
space.

In the Belt of Orion
Three stars are alight:
Pride of the lion,
Strength of the boar,
And love for Silene the huntress he follows
by night.



Night

Night can be a gypsy
In a torn worn hood,
And a rough gruff voice,
And a dark stark mood,
And holes in her hovel in a dank rank wood.
Lest she steal me away
To the wastes of the sky
I'll hide from the gypsy
When the wind rides high.

Night can be a queen
In a blue velvet gown,
With a pearl on her brow
And diamonds in her crown,
And a silky silver train lined with swan-white
down.

To sing and to play
In the courts of the sky
I'll bow to the queen
When the moon rides high.



The Star That Watches the Moon

When the dark dome is bare
Of stardust thickly strewn,
A single star is set upon the air
To watch the crescent moon.

She is so young and bright
But not yet very wise,
And there are dangers errant in the night
To take her from men's eyes.

There is the bully wind
Would blow her off the sphere
But for the watching star who holds her
 pinned
Upon the welkin clear.

There is the ogre cloud
Would swallow her entire
If one star chosen from the legion crowd
Watched not with eye of fire.

There is the lightning sword
Would carve her from her place,
There is the thunder's devastating chord
Would blast her out of space.



There is the nightingale
Whose love-song floods the dome
Would charm the young moon to earth's
 green vale
From heaven's blue home.

So in the midnight sky
The lovely lunar girl
Is star-watched till her crescent frailty
Is rounded to a pearl.

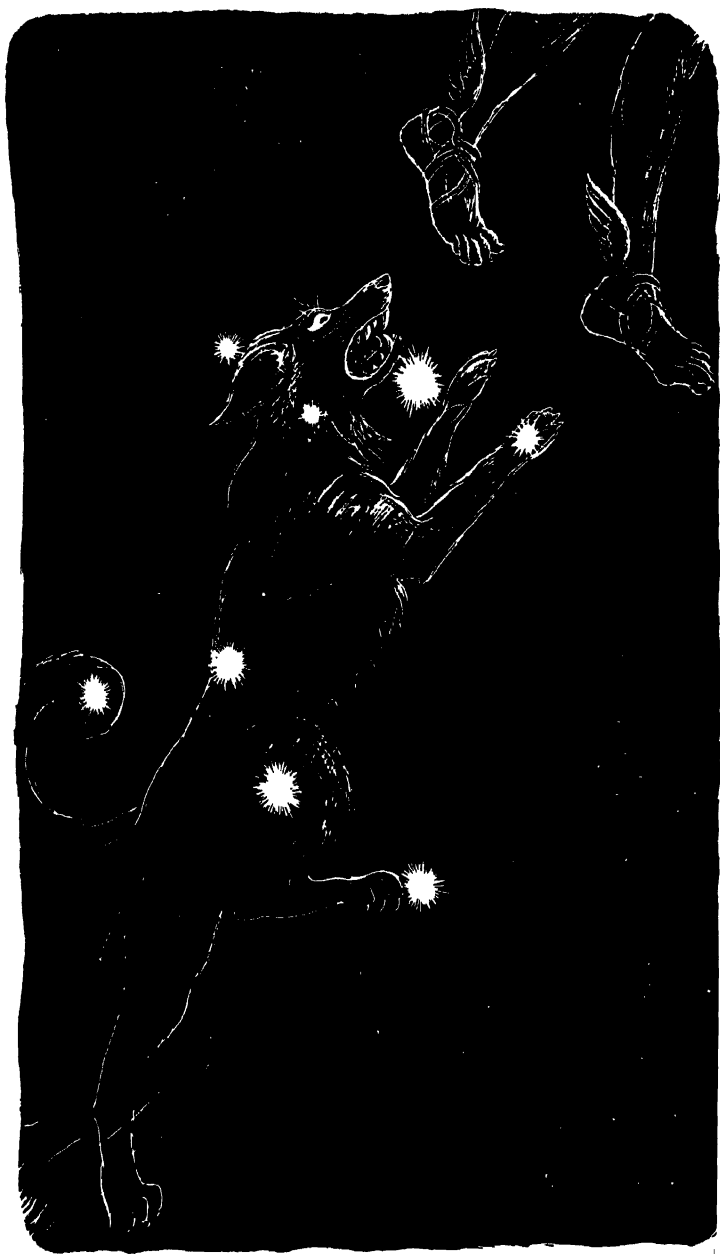
Dog-Star

Sirius

When silver-witted Mercury,
The nimble-fingered cheat,
Slips about the Firmament
With feathers on his feet,
To do a bit of thievery,
Little stars go quivery,
And little clouds turn white—
 Wuff! barks Sirius,
The Watchdog of the night,
 Wuff! wuff! barks Sirius,
 There's mischief in the night.

Then Perseus draws his shining sword,
Orion girds his belt,
Hercules swings his mighty club
And dons his lion's pelt;
At the first hint of knavery
Heaven is bright with bravery
To put the mischief right,
 When *Wuff!* barks Sirius,
The Watchdog of the night,
 Wuff! wuff! barks Sirius,
 Look out for rogues tonight!

Quick-as-silver Mercury,
Who pilfers, picks and steals
The jewels of the Firmament
With wings upon his heels,
Is set upon by Sirius
With barkings most delirius,
More dreadful than his bite—
 Wuff! barks Sirius,
The Watchdog of the night,
 Wuff! WUFF! barks Sirius,
And puts the thief to flight.



Pole-Star

Polaris

I am the Star of mariners
On the sea.
Nelson and Drake and Shackleton
Sailed by me.

I am the guide of adventurers
Through the dark.
Marco Polo my namesake
Knew my mark.

All who travelled the Northern
Hemisphere,
Powder monkey and admiral,
Privateer,

Scott, Paul Jones and Frobisher,
Captain Cook,
Sindbad and Long John Silver
And James Hook,

Nansen, Raleigh, Columbus,
Were my friends.
I beheld their beginnings
And their ends.

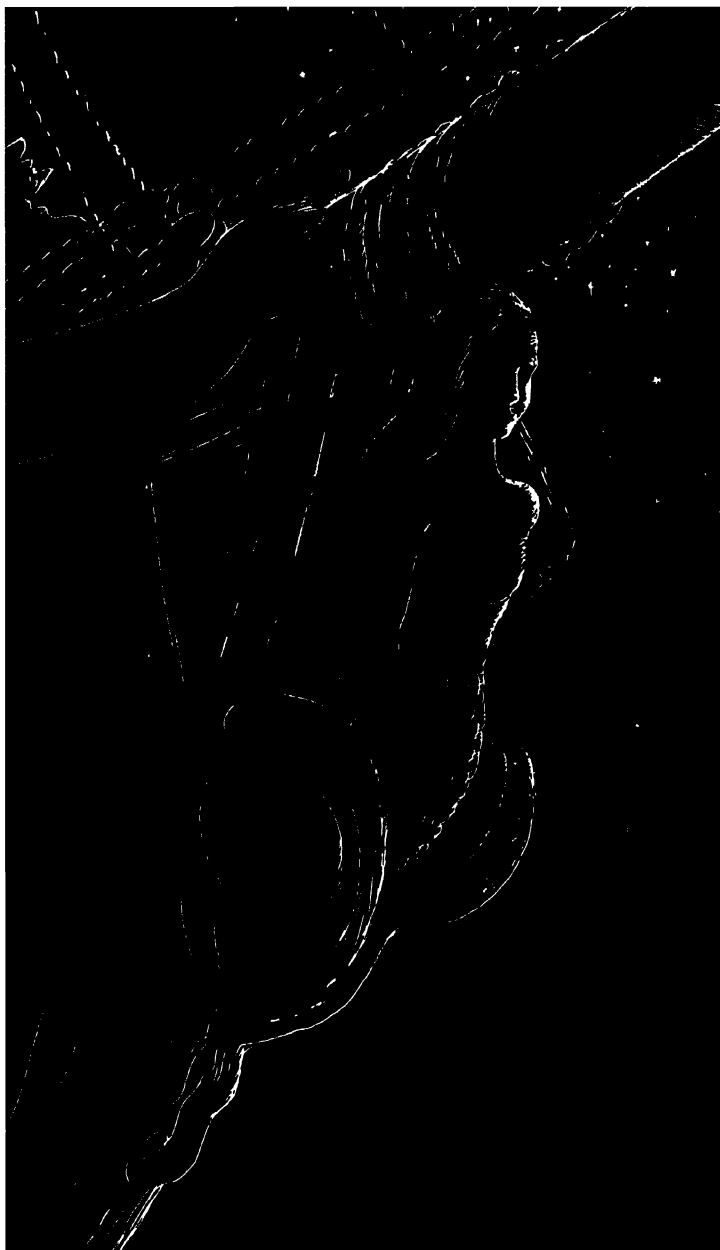
I am the heaven-set steersman
Of the deep,
All ships and all sea-farers
In my keep.



The Southern Cross

When ships have crossed the Line
That cleaves the Seven Seas
And lose the Polar Sign
That watched their argosies,
In what then must
Poor mariners put their trust
Who to the darkening skies
Upturn their anxious eyes?

Their losing is no loss.
They see the Cross divine,
The four-starred Southern Cross
Replace the Polar Sign,
The Cross set high
Against the darkening sky
To shine above the seas
In the Antipodes.



The Meteors

The meteors are slipping
Like skaters on the sky!
The meteors are whipping
Their lashes round the sky!
Here another splashes!
There another flashes!
And smashes into ashes
Far from the sky.

Slim silver fishes,
All and each
Are swift sly wishes
Swimming out of reach.
If you will go fishing,
You must do your wishing
Before they finish swishing
And fall on the beach.

The meteors are sliding
All along the sky!
The meteors are gliding
All about the sky!
Shimmering stems of flowers!
Dripping summer showers!
The meteors are riding
All round the sky!



Lucky Star

Rich or poor or low or high,
No matter who you are,
Somewhere or other in the sky
You have got a lucky star.

If you find a penny or lose a cold,
Or get a lift in a car,
Or live to be a hundred years old,
You can thank your lucky star.

If you sit by the fire when the blizzard
squalls,
If you journey to Zanzibar,
If you're out when your Aunt Jemima
calls,
You may thank your lucky star.

If you are left in the breakfast-room
Alone with the honey-jar,
If the bulbs you planted in winter bloom
In spring, thank your lucky star.

If you see the new moon swinging light,
If you hear two owls afar
Question-and-answering in the night,
You must thank your lucky star.

If something is there, whatever you do,
To make what else you'd mar,
And carry you over, and see you through,
You were born with a lucky star.

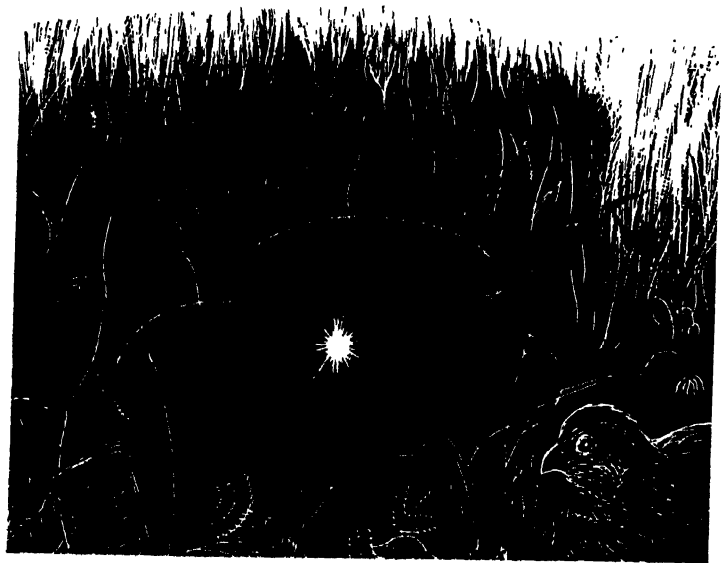


The Lost Star

Twilight came
calm and cool,
and a star
lay in a pool,
a beautiful
point of flame,
fallen so far
it had lost its name,
lost, lost
its heavenly name.

It trembled. O,
was it weeping
among the waving weeds,
and sleeping
minnows, and creeping
tadpoles? *Sso . . .*
sighed the reeds
to and fro,
ssso . . . ssso . . .
softly, *ssso. . .*

A wind crossed
that place,
it muffled and ruffled
like grey lace
the pool's face,
the grasses tossed,
the star was shuffled
away, and lost,
for ever and ever
lost, lost.



Halley's Comet

Scores of years ago
Halley had a Comet.
He was in the know
Before the light streamed from it.
He to the wondering mass
Proclaimed that it would sally
On such-and-such a night; and as
Surprisingly it came to pass,
'That Comet's *mine*!' cried Halley.

Halley went to dust
As to the mount Mahomet;
Yet still the masses must
Concede he's kept his Comet.
When next it does not fail
To star it in night's ballet,
Look through your telescope—and
frail
As frost athwart the Comet's tail
You'll spy the soul of Halley.



Aurora Borealis

Men must go north to see the dawn

Dancing on the midnight sky,
Making the stars on Dian's lawn

Dim as pebbles dusty-dry.
Showing her flowing veils of light,
Throwing her glowing spears of light,
Blowing her icicles of light,

Her stalactites hung heaven-high:
Men must go north to see Aurora
Coming and going, crowned with bright
White fire, across the halls of night,
Dancing on the midnight sky.



Morning Star

Lucifer

Was then the morning too bright for him,
The Star with the burning name?
Was even midnight too light for him
No longer one of a legion
That he plunged to the starless region.
Where he was the sole red flame?
Morning Star! wail the Cherubim,
Morning Star! weep the Seraphim,
But they will not utter his name.



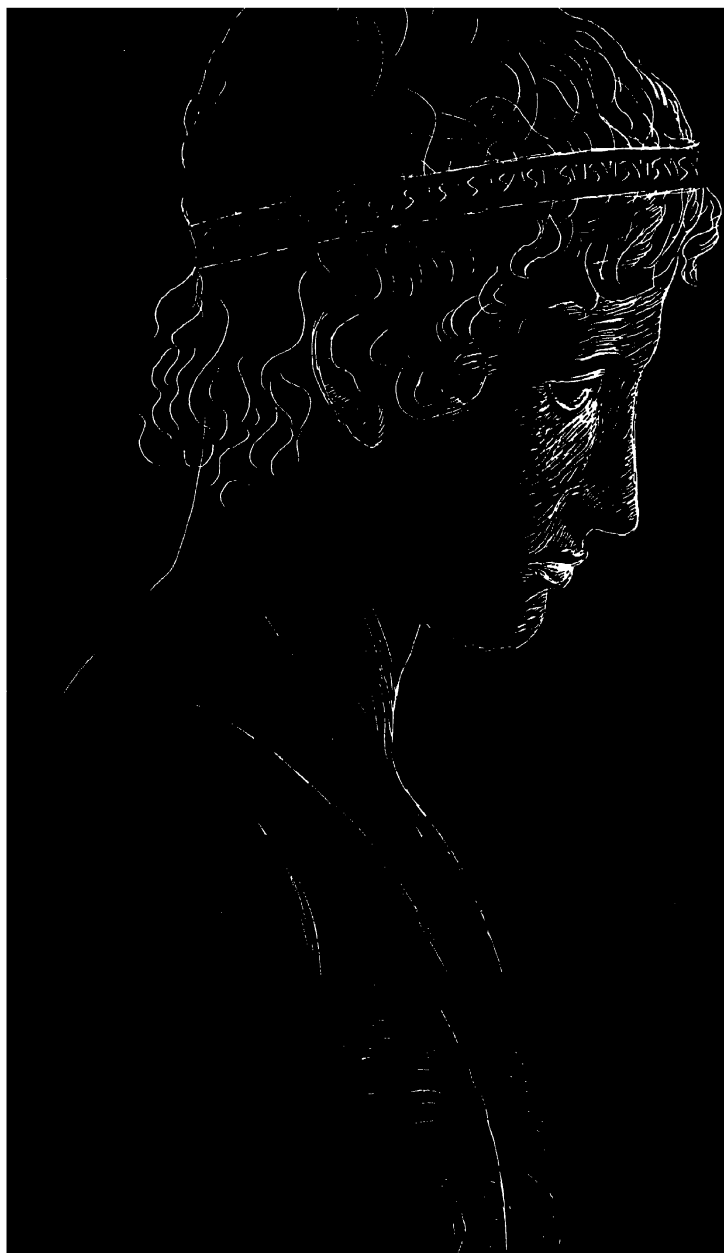
Evening Star

Hesper

Quiet mist, the milk of dreams,
Rollen from slow-running streams
Steals across the stubble-field
Emptied of its yellow yield.
There no rich and heavy head
Nods. The grain is harvested,
And the granary fed.

A solitary patient elm
Planted on the vanished realm
Of this solid-seeming sphere
Leans its brow against the clear
Heavens which have grown less far.
Drowsy tree and meadow are
Waiting the Evening Star.

He comes. Not with the beat of drums
And sound of trombones, Hesper
comes
Like one high note from a flute.
Then the muffled land is mute
And the trusting tree doth sleep.
From the star-watched mists that creep
There are dreams to reap.



Moon Rainbow

Rainbow round the moon!
Rainbow round the moon!
Anything may happen now,
Soon, soon, soon!

The stars may shout for glee
And stop again to cry,
Mermaids from the sea
Take to wing and fly.

The red rose lose her flush
And turn as pale as may,
And the white rose blush
For what she will not say.

The birds of the air may talk
With a mortal tongue,
Trees may wake and walk,
And old Time grow young.

Shadows may slip their sheath
And run without their bodies,
Marble stones may breathe,
A fly may be a goddess.

Anything may happen
Strange and soon,
Till the rainbow ring
Fades round the moon.



The Old Shepherds

Star of Bethlehem

Do ye remember? . . . Surely I remember. . .
Were it come April? were it come September?
Nay friend, nay friend,
It were the latter end

Of one December . . .
We cracked our knuckles at the charcoal
ember . . .
Ay, ay, 'twas so,
Amany years ago.

Han't ye fergot the Star? . . . I han't fergotten
Yon Star. Why, wudn't I the first to spot
'un? . . .
Nay friend, nay friend,
The merricle-star did wend
Sky high, an' brought 'un
To some old barton, leaky-roofed an'
rotten . . .
Ay, ay, 'twas so,
How many years ago?



Why was it? . . . Hey? . . . Why was it? . . .

Why, becos it—

Becos it—dang my wamblin' wits! why was
it? . . .

Nay friend, nay friend,

Leave cudgellin', go tend

Thy yowes, an' closet

The yeanlings in new straw . . . Bless us, why
was it

Yon Star came so

A mort o' years ago? . . .

